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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROBERT BLAKE VISITS BORDER AREA, ENGAGES WITH STUDENTS IN JESSORE

JESSORE, MARCH 21 -- Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert O. Blake, Jr., arrived in Jessore district today for a one-day visit. His first stop was in Benapole, where he was briefed on border immigration and security issues, and then toured a USAID-supported shelter that seeks to rehabilitate victims of human trafficking. He then traveled to the American Corner in Jessore, where he engaged in a lively conversation with 30 students from Michael Modhushudon University & College. He concluded his trip with a visit to Maruful Islam, mayor of Jessore, before departing back to Dhaka.

Assistant Secretary Blake arrived in Dhaka on Saturday, March 19, for a four-day round of meetings with senior Bangladesh government officials, civil society leaders, social entrepreneurs and high-level U.S. Government officials from the region. He will also participate in a one-day Regional Strategic Initiative conference at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka on March 22. He will depart on March 23.

Mr. Blake was appointed Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs in May 2009. As Assistant Secretary, he oversees U.S. foreign policy with India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. He previously served as Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives from 2006 to mid-2009 and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission in New Delhi, India from 2003 – 2006. This is his second trip to Bangladesh in his current role.

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